

POPULATION & ECONOMY



SILER CITY, N. C.

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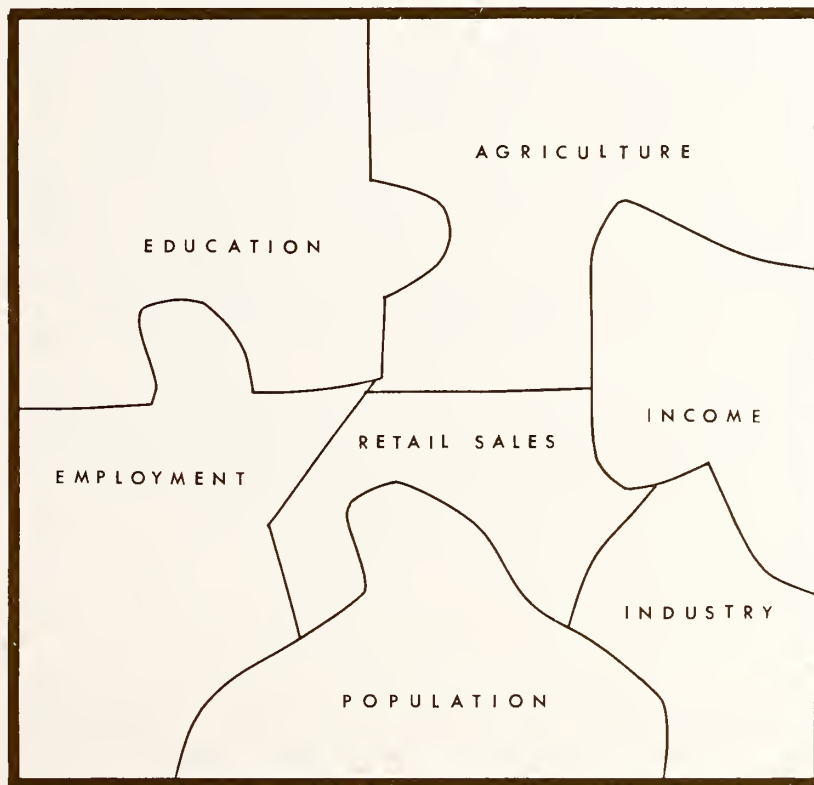
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ABSTRACT: This is a basic source of factual information pertaining to this small North Carolina town. Included is past population growth trends and future projections so that local officials might better determine what extent community facilities will be needed. Population projections were based on a 1968 house count and extended through the use of growth trends which have occurred in this community during the last five decades. The local economy is analyzed in detail. The organization of the report is one which attempts to illustrate the inter-relationship between the population base, the level of educational attainment, and the functioning of the local economy.

POPULATION & ECONOMY



SILER CITY, N. C.



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The Town of Siler City, North Carolina

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Summary	2
The Population	
Early Physical Growth of Siler City	5
Early Population	5
Population Growth From 1950-1960	6
Population Growth From 1960-1968	
in Siler City	9
in the Fringe Area	9
Total Planning Area Population	11
Population Projections	
Siler City	12
Planning Area	12
Factors Influencing Population Projections	
Females of Childbearing Age	15
Age Group Structure	15
Other Vital Statistics	16
Migration	16
Population Characteristics	
Minority Groups	18
Educational Level of the Population	18
Employment in Siler City	21
Employment in Mathews Township	22
Area-Wide Industrial Labor Market	22
Family Income	23
Per Capita Income	25
The Economy	
Industry	26
Industrial Promotion	28
Siler City Development Corporation	28
Industrial Development Corporation	28
Chamber of Commerce	28
The Local Situation	28
Agriculture	30
Improved Production	31
Retail Trade	33
Conclusion	35

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
I Population of Siler City, 1890-1960	5
II Population of Chatham County and Mathews Township, 1870-1960	6
III Relationship of Siler City's Population to Chatham County and Pittsboro Population Totals, 1890-1960 .	7
IV Mathews Township and Surrounding Township's Census Totals and Percentage Change	8
V Fringe Area Population	11
VI Siler City and Chatham County Male-Female Population By Age Groups for 1960	16
VII Educational Data For Siler City, 1960	19
VIII Siler City School Enrollment For Period Ending November 28, 1967	20
IX Siler City Employment Status, 1960	21
X Mathews Township Employment Status, 1960	22
XI Number and Characteristics of Production-Type Workers Within A 25 Mile Radius of Siler City . . .	23
XII Median Family Income, 1959	24
XIII Distribution of Family Income, 1959	24
XIV Per Capita Income, 1959	25
XV Siler City Planning Area Industrial Firms	27
XVI Estimated Income Derived From Chatham County's Farm Products, 1961 and 1966	31
XVII Retail Sales Trends For Siler City By Number of Establishments, Employees, Payroll and Sales . . .	33
XVIII Retail Sales Trends For Siler City By Type of Establishment, 1954, 1958, and 1963	34

LIST OF GRAPHICS

	<u>Page</u>
Map I Townships Surrounding Mathews Township and Siler City	8
Map (Back Cover) Regional Setting	
<u>Chart</u> : Comparative Population Trends By Rate of Growth, 1890-1990	14

INTRODUCTION

To develop future plans, a basic factual knowledge of the area must be compiled and understood. Two planning reports about Siler City contain the needed information. The present report on the town's population and economy analyzes the forces which are creating a unique local situation. This information further adds to the initial Land Use Survey and Analysis planning report undertaken by the Division of Community Planning for this community. Whereas the Population and Economy report discusses the composition of the populace in terms of age groups, sex, employable wage earners, educational background, etc., the Land Use Survey and Analysis analyzed locational aspects and amounts of land serving the population in their everyday activities.

The local situation has changed in recent years. Siler City is becoming a part of the urbanized Piedmont Crescent of North Carolina. More and more interaction is occurring between the local population and facilities in Greensboro, Burlington and other large nearby cities. The rural character is changing to a variety of industrialization. In part, this has caused a constant growth in population. Within the last several years the availability of surplus labor has been lessened because more rural residents are working in the local industry. Also, the availability of housing is nearly nonexistent. To cope with this problem an unusual number of subdivisions have been recently developed in the fringe area around town. Construction in town is occurring more so than in many communities of a similar size.

SUMMARY

Siler City, the largest town in rural Chatham County, is much influenced by the surrounding agricultural area. Locally grown poultry and eggs, cattle, hogs, sheep, tobacco, grains, and timber are a reflection of the industry located in and around Siler City. Furniture and lumber, flour and feed, processed food, textiles, and boxes are some of the related industries that make up the variety of local industrial production. The industries presently (1967) employ approximately 3,200 workers who receive nearly \$12 million in industrial wages annually.

The Town of Siler City has an estimated January, 1968, population of 4,934 persons.¹ This, however, is not an accurate picture of the urban area whereas many families have recently moved into nearby subdivisions. In the fringe area extending one mile beyond the town limits in all directions there are approximately 1,822 persons. The planning area includes the total of the town and fringe area, or in this case, approximately 6,756 persons as of January, 1968.

Educational achievement and occupational potentials are very closely related. The educational level in Siler City is above the state average (median school years completed was 10.3 compared to 8.9 in 1960). The fact that the largest percentage of workers in the town are employed as blue collar laborers in commercial, public and private services, and industry indicates that education and employment skills are not fully developed. There are a considerable number of adults who with additional training could achieve higher incomes in industrially related jobs. For those graduating from high school and advanced training, the potential economic achievement during a lifetime is greatly enhanced. A more educated resident population will result in furthering the community's overall economic growth.

The town presently attempts to attract industry through an active Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the Siler City Development Corporation owns land to sell to industry. The Corporation has developed an industrial park northwest of town. The Industrial Development Corporation has the legal ability to issue industrial development bonds to purchase sites and finance industrial construction. The latter is a offshoot of the Siler City Development Corporation.

Economic benefits are received by Siler City for several reasons. In reference to the county, Siler City is the major

¹ On page 9 is a description of the method used to estimate the present population.

point of urban activity. It possesses the best variety of commercial and industrial facilities of all communities in Chatham County. It shares the benefit with the rest of the county in regards to proximity to the cities of the Piedmont Crescent and to the Research Triangle.

Future gains might be realized in Siler City that are related to regional projects. The relocation and upgrading of U. S. 421 will improve movement between Siler City and the Greensboro area. As travel time is reduced between the two urban areas, Piedmont industrial and commercial outlets may be able to locate in Siler City and still have ready access to Greensboro. Three proposed reservoirs in and around Chatham County may have some effect on the economy of Siler City. In the eastern part of Chatham County is the proposed New Hope Reservoir. This U. S. Army Corps of Engineers project will create about 150 miles of shoreline, much of which will be opened for residential development and recreation areas. Land is currently being purchased for this project. Smaller reservoirs are being planned for construction at Howard's Mill (22 miles southwest of Siler City in Moore County) and at a location near Randleman (20 miles northwest of town). Construction of these impoundments may begin about 1970.

The County Commissioners are presently cooperating in a joint effort with the County Planning Board and the Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors known as the Resource Conservation and Development Program. Chatham County and five other nearby counties are together attempting to achieve a workable plan for water resources development in the area. Additional considerations in this program are the encouragement of industries to locate in the area, complete soil surveys, improvement of agricultural marketing procedures and facilities, and recreational development to name but a few aspects.

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners has hired L. E. Wooten Engineering Associates from Raleigh to prepare a county-wide water and sewer plan with proposals for the next twenty years. The report will be completed early this year (1968). The engineers are proposing an eventual water system extending between Siler City, Pittsboro and the Gulf-Goldston areas. The system is being designed to handle the expected county demand in 1990.

The County Commissioners should soon realize the necessity and value of a county subdivision ordinance to preserve many of the attractive qualities of the rural areas and protect the county from undesirable development. The commissioners have applied for grant funds from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to partially defray the cost of a county-wide planning program. Both activities will benefit the Town of Siler City in future years.

Present needs of the community center around public education not only for the younger population but also for additional vocational training for the adult population. Without training programs in mechanical operations and skill oriented job training for persons over 30-35, the labor market will become more and more restricted. Industry will not locate in an area if it is relatively uncertain of its future availability of labor. Vocational education will also increase the capabilities of the laborer so that he can be more competitive in the job market. In turn, more industries which require greater industrial skills will be more likely to choose the Siler City area for location if the area has available industrial training facilities.

Local residents are becoming increasingly alert to the regional perspective. During the past few years, Siler City residents have realized the need to have "expanding horizons" rather than a local community attitude. Leaders in the community have actively sought industry and have brought it into the planning area. Growth -- economic, physical, and social -- has resulted from becoming involved with the neighboring counties. Improvements in education and economic opportunity are also on the upswing in the region.

Emphasis is now turning away from the present toward the future needs. There are those in the community who foresee the need to plan future development, to expand the size of existing facilities like the hospital and library, and to provide recreation opportunities for the young and old segments of the population.

This same hope for a more liveable future environment has been evident among the area's county administrators. Chatham will soon have a county-wide planning program to coordinate development projects. The New Hope Reservoir, the relocation of U. S. 421, and the Resource, Conservation, and Development Program will all strengthen the county's economic, social and physical ties to its neighbors.

POPULATION

POPULATION

Early Physical Growth of Siler City

Siler City's location has and will continue to influence its growth. The town began as a small settlement in 1870 called Mathews Crossroads. This was the location where the Raleigh-Salisbury and Greensboro-Fayetteville stagecoach roads crossed. The settlement was renamed Siler City at a later date and then incorporated in 1887. The original area of the town was one square mile.

Early Population

The first U. S. Census to be taken in Siler City was in 1890. The reported population was 254 persons. In the following decade the town annexed "Cotton Mill Village" which was the main reason for an increase of 186 persons in the second population enumeration. (See table below). The greatest percentage of growth was experienced between 1900-1910 when 455

TABLE I

POPULATION OF SILER CITY
1890-1960

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Net Increase</u>
1890	254	---
1900	440	186 ^a
1910	895	455
1920	1253	358
1930	1730	477
1940	2197	467
1950	2501	304 ^a
1960	4455	1754 ^b

^a Partially due to annexation.

^b Majority of population increase due to annexation.

Source: 1960 U. S. Census.

persons were gained. If we are to use today's figure of 3.3 persons as being representative of the average size family back in 1900-1910, the 455 persons were representative of 138 additional houses which were built in town during that decade.

During this period several industries located in Siler City, two of which are now the Boling Chair Company and Siler City Mills. The town realized a net increase in population of 350-500 persons for each decade from 1910-1950.

As a means of comparing Siler City's population growth with other local governmental units, the following summary of county and township population figures are included. Table II indicates the census counts for Chatham County and Mathews Township (which includes Siler City). The growth of Mathews Township has been constant since 1870 while the county's population experienced a decline between 1890-1910 before population growth was again established.

TABLE II

POPULATION OF CHATHAM COUNTY
AND MATHEWS TOWNSHIP, 1870-1960

<u>Year</u>	<u>Chatham County</u>	<u>Mathews Township (Siler City Included)</u>	
	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percent of County</u>
1870	19,723	873	4
1880	23,453	1381	6
1890	25,413	1848	7
1900	23,912	2222	9
1910	22,635	2897	13
1920	23,814	3639	15
1930	24,177	4471	18
1940	24,720	5606	23
1950	25,392	6377	25
1960	26,785	7718	29

Source: 1960 U. S. Census.

Population Growth From 1950-1960

Growth to the town area from 1950-1960 was only 200 persons; however, an annexation encompassing the area surrounding the entire town in 1960 increased the town's population by 1,754 persons. The town limits, after annexation in 1960, encompassed an area of 4 square miles and a total population of 4,455 persons. The increase of 200 persons in the area of the old town limits between 1950-1960 was partially the result of a movement of families to newly developing subdivisions within the old town limits. Homewood Acres, Forest Hills, Dogwood Acres and the

area north of Jordan Mathews High School were the primary growth areas in the 1950's; all were annexed in 1960.

Chatham County population gained only 7,062 persons in nine decades up to 1960. Mathews Township was the location of 6,845 of the 7,062 overall population increase in the county during the same ninety years. By 1960, 7,718 of the county's population resided in and around Siler City. Reference here again is made to Table II.

The Siler City population, as noted above, is the major population concentration in the county. Table III indicates the constant growth of Siler City and its increasing importance relative to the total county and township populations. The biggest

TABLE III
RELATIONSHIP OF SILER CITY'S POPULATION
TO CHATHAM COUNTY AND PITTSBORO POPULATION TOTALS
1890-1960

<u>Year</u>	<u>Siler City Population</u>	<u>Siler City Percent of County</u>	<u>Pittsboro Population</u>
1890	254	1	a
1900	440	1.8	424
1910	895	4	502
1920	1253	5.3	584
1930	1730	7.2	675
1940	2197	8.9	826
1950	2501	9.8	1094
1960	4455	16.6	1215

^a Pittsboro figures were not returned separately from the township until the 1900 census.

gain occurred because of the 1960 annexation in Siler City.

While the above indicates what has happened to the population in Mathews Township and Chatham County, it is interesting to compare this information with the population records of the adjacent townships surrounding Mathews Township (Siler City). Table IV compares five adjacent townships in Chatham County and three more which are to the west in Randolph County. Overall, the eight townships show a growth of 3,717 persons from 1910-1960. Individually, only Liberty and Columbia Townships in adjacent Randolph County and Bear Creek Township in Chatham County realized an appreciable gain of population due to their small

community in each case. Hickory Mountain Township in Chatham County had the largest population decrease over the last five decades. None of the surrounding townships have increased to the extent of Mathews. This reflects the absence of growing communities which act as nodes for population concentrations.

TABLE IV

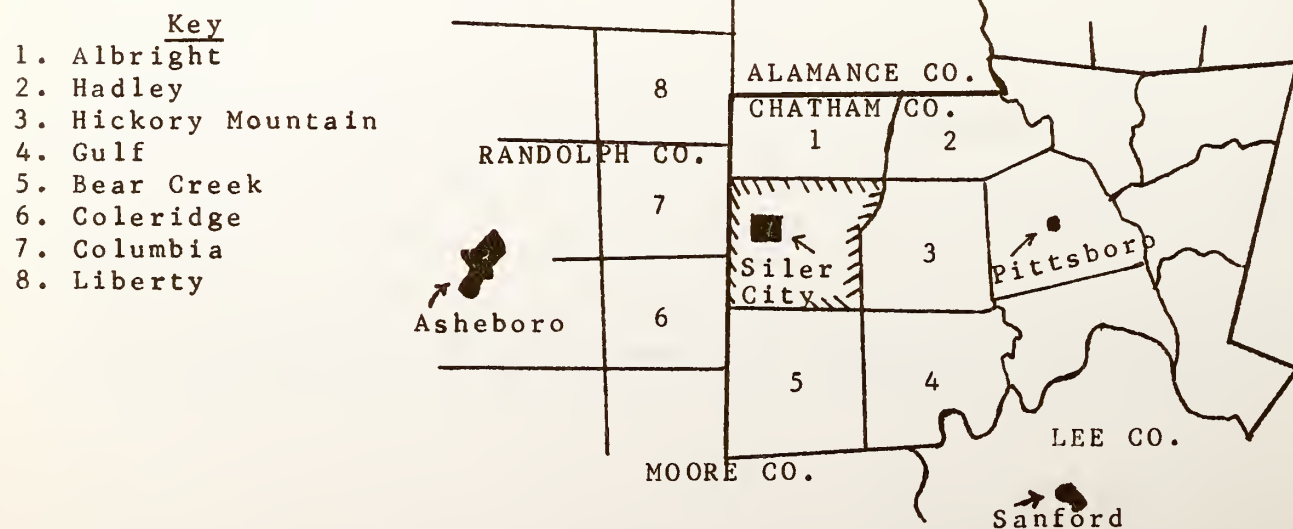
MATHEWS TOWNSHIP AND SURROUNDING TOWNSHIP'S
CENSUS TOTALS AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 1910-1960

Township	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	Percent Change 1910-1960
MATHEWS TOWNSHIP	2,897	3,639	4,471	5,606	6,377	7,718	166.4
Chatham County							
Albright	1,257	1,363	1,296	1,363	1,494	1,403	11.6
Hadley	1,045	1,082	999	904	854	895	-14.4
Hickory Mountain	2,293	2,258	1,936	1,729	1,522	1,374	-40.1
Gulf	2,725	3,021	2,955	2,903	2,870	2,858	4.9
Bear Creek	2,227	2,522	2,548	2,382	2,449	2,640	18.5
Randolph County							
Coleridge	1,585	1,647	1,637	1,560	1,605	1,422	-10.3
Columbia	2,980	2,146	3,464	3,954	3,599	4,250	42.6
Liberty	1,880	2,126	2,908	3,194	3,600	3,610	92.0
Total for Eight Townships*	14,735	17,163	17,743	17,989	17,984	18,452	25.2

* Excluding Mathews Township.

Source: Population of Counties and Minor Civil Divisions: 1910-1960; Piedmont Subregion of North Carolina, Department of Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning, January, 1962.

MAP I TOWNSHIPS SURROUNDING MATHEWS TOWNSHIP AND SILER CITY



Population Growth 1960-1968

Siler City

There has been no census for Siler City since 1960. It is possible, however, to arrive at a fairly accurate estimate of the population by using the number of housing units as a base. The Land Use Survey and Analysis indicated that there were 1,490 dwelling units in town as of August, 1967. This count has now been revised for January, 1968. All dwelling units were counted for the survey. Included are single family dwellings, duplexes, apartments and mobile homes. As of January 1, 1968, the town area contained:

1,288 single family units
109 two and three family residences
70 multi family units (4 or more)
28 mobile homes

or a total of 1,495 dwelling units.

By using the 1960 city average of 3.3 persons per dwelling unit and the above up-to-date house count, the January 1, 1978, population can be estimated. Multiplying the number of households (1,495) by the average persons per dwelling unit (3.3) gives an estimated population for January 1, 1968, in Siler City of 4,934 inhabitants. This is an increase of 479 persons since 1960. Building permits verify this increase. In 1960 the census enumerated 1,347 dwelling units. Between 1960 and January 1, 1968, building permits have been issued by the Town Clerk's Office for construction of approximately 150 residential units. Combining the 1,347 existing units in 1960 with 150 building permits for 1960 through 1967, the total of 1,497 dwelling units is very close to the up-to-date house count.

Fringe Area

The one mile area beyond the town limits, dubbed as the "fringe area", is going through a process of growth similar to that which occurred in the Dogwood Acres and Homewood Acres subdivisions prior to their annexation in 1960. Just beyond Siler City's town boundaries are seven actively developing residential areas and an extension of a subdivision which was fully within the town at the time of the 1960 annexation.

These seven housing areas outside the town limits of Siler City are:

Booker T. Washington Park Subdivision
Crestview Subdivision
"East Side" Development
Eden Hills Subdivision
Pine Forest Subdivision
Pineview-Hillcrest Development
Sherwood Forest Subdivision

The seven areas include 89 occupied houses and an estimated population of 353 persons based on survey responses.*

* Average household size 3.95 persons.

Each of the residential subdivisions were surveyed in late 1967 through the use of a single page questionnaire administered house to house. Eden Hills was included even though it is beyond the one mile planning area boundary. The location of the Eden Hills subdivision is closely related to both the industrial park and Siler City. Dependence of Eden Hills residents upon Siler City is no less than the other fringe area subdivisions.

The residents of these subdivisions represent a population who has relocated in the last eight years. Responses to the survey indicate that ninety percent of the homes in these areas have been constructed since 1960. Nearly half of the houses have been built in the last three years (1965-1967).

All of these subdivision residents were not a part of the 1960 census in their present location; this is a substantial increase in building for the Siler City area. Survey responses indicate sixty-four (64) of the families (roughly 224 persons) lived in Siler City prior to moving to a fringe area subdivision. The small number of vacant homes in town and new residential construction are two indicators of a growing community. The vacated housing of the 64 families provided dwellings for new residents, became replacements for destroyed buildings, and provided a variety of housing types for families moving into the area. The vacancies for prospective home buyers are almost nil at the present time in Siler City.

In addition to the seven subdivisions, Homewood Acres has grown so that currently twelve new homes in this subdivision are beyond the town limits. Those twelve houses, all built since 1964, represent approximately forty-seven persons. This area was not included in the survey but it too represents a relocated population and one that is almost entirely dependent on Siler City.

Other fringe area housing includes farm houses, rural non-farm residences, and mobile homes. There are 320 rural homes in addition to those found in subdivisions. If the family size is an average of 3.95 persons as is true in the fringe area subdivisions, the rural farm homes and rural non-farm residences would provide approximately 1,264 persons to the fringe area population.

Mobile homes were surveyed in the fringe area as well as the town. The survey revealed forty-one mobile homes located in the fringe area as of January, 1968. Only one trailer park provided rental sites for mobile homes in the planning area. It is located in the fringe area just east of town. Fifteen trailers were temporarily located there at the time of the survey. Twenty-six of the forty-one mobile home families responded to the survey in the fringe area. Each mobile home contained an average of three persons. The forty-one fringe area mobile homes represented approximately 123 additional area residents.

Together, the one mile fringe area population totaled an estimated 1,822 persons. The following breakdown summarizes the above statements.

TABLE V

SILER CITY FRINGE AREA POPULATION
JANUARY 1, 1968

<u>Residence</u>	<u>Number Units</u>	<u>Ave. Persons Per Dwelling</u>	<u>Approximate Population</u>
Subdivisions	111	3.95	435
Rural farm and non-farm	320	3.95*	1264
Mobile homes	<u>41</u>	3.0	<u>123</u>
Total	472		1822

* Assumed to be the same as the subdivisions.

Source: Housing Survey and Land Use Survey conducted by the Division of Community Planning, August and December, 1967.

Total Planning Area Population

A spot check was made during the first week in January, 1968, to update all housing counts. The town population was estimated at 4,934 persons. The fringe area which contains approximately 1,822 persons brings the January, 1968, population count for the Siler City planning area to an estimated 6,756 residents. Mathews Township, which includes all of the planning area plus additional land area, is estimated to have had one-third of the county's population in 1967.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Siler City

Siler City has been experiencing an increase in population since its incorporation in 1887. Unless some unusual and unforeseen events transpire during the planning period, Siler City should continue to increase in population. The big question centers around how much of an increase can be expected.

After a study of the area's economy and past population trends, the following projections have been made. Underlying the projections is the assumption that the industrial promoters of the community will be able to continue to attract new industry into the area.

In 1960 Siler City had a population of 4,455. During the past eight years the population has moved upward to an estimated 4,934 as of January, 1968. This equals a growth rate of approximately 1.34 percent per year. Looking to the future, the population of Siler City will probably continue to increase at this rate to around 1980. Thereafter the growth rate will probably slow down due primarily to the diminishing vacant land in the incorporated area. If during the 1980's the town annexes all of the urbanizing areas adjacent to the town limits, the 1990 population is projected to be 6,500. If these areas are not annexed, the Siler City population in 1990 is projected to be 6,100.

SILER CITY POPULATION PROJECTIONS

1968 -	4,950*
1970 -	5,050
1980 -	5,750
1990 -	(6,500 with annexation
	(6,100 without annexation

* Estimate based on a housing count.

Planning Area

Of most importance to the planning project is the population estimate for the planning area rather than just for the town. The population of the planning area supports the economy of Siler City and makes the commercial, industrial, educational, commercial, social, and governmental activities what they are. The populace residing in the planning area may at times collectively act as parasites upon the town but their presence in a reciprocal supportive community role is all essential in realizing a liveable and functioning community. It is from the planning area population that future needs should be projected.

It is estimated that 1,822 people reside within one mile of the corporate limits of Siler City. By adding this number for the fringe area to the Siler City population, it can be concluded that approximately 6,756 people lived in the Siler City planning area as of January, 1968. For projecting the population for 1970, 1980, and 1990 an annual increase of 2.2 percent (21.7 per decade) was used. This percentage represents the average annual increase of the township for the last fifty years.

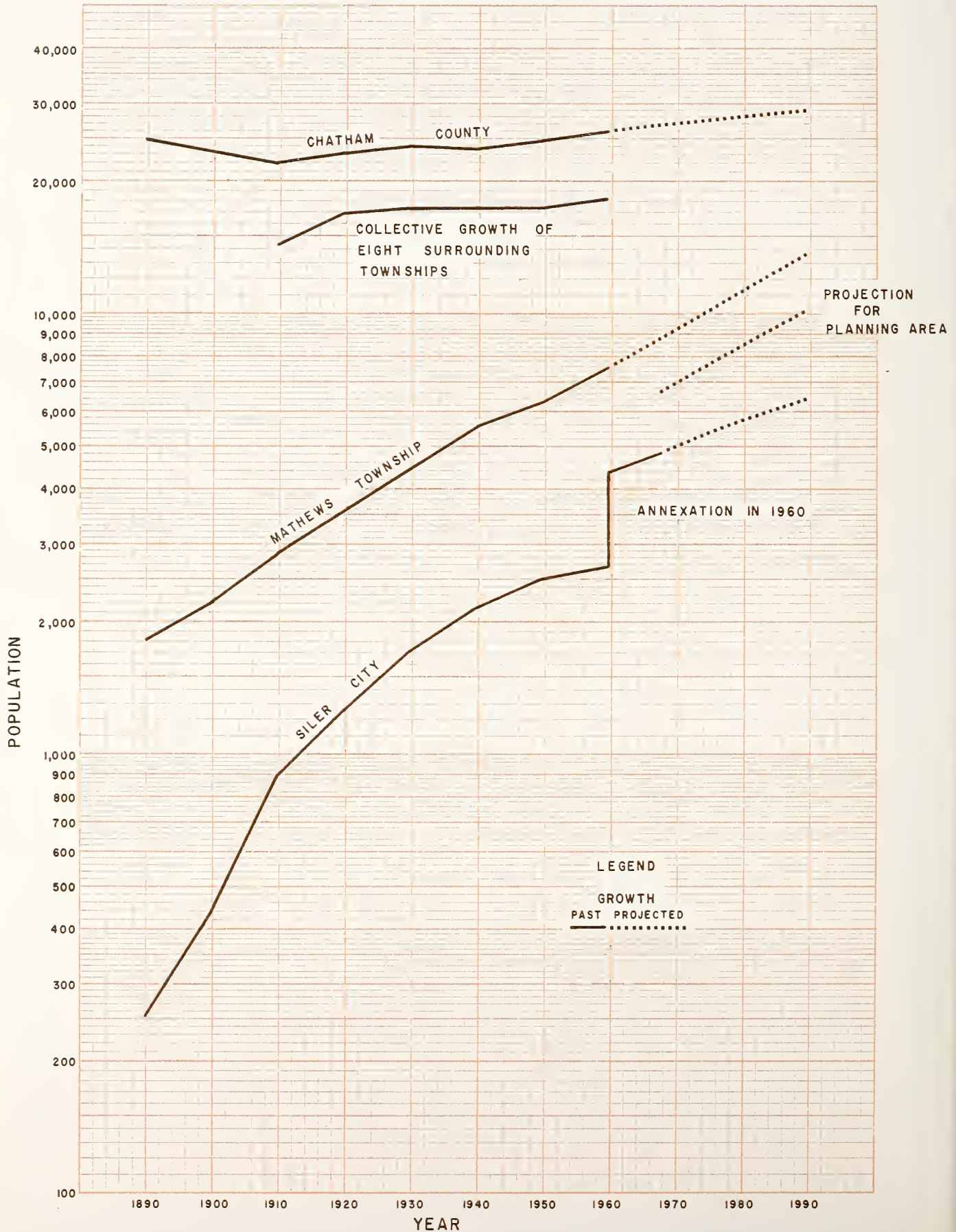
PLANNING AREA POPULATION PROJECTIONS

1968 -	6,756*
1970 -	7,100
1980 -	8,600
1990 -	10,300

* Estimate based on a housing count.

Chart I depicts the population projections by the average rates per decade graphically on the following page. The trend lines indicate growth for Siler City and Mathews Township at a decreasing rate. See page 14.

COMPARATIVE POPULATION TRENDS BY RATE OF GROWTH 1890-1990



FACTORS INFLUENCING POPULATION PROJECTIONS

In addition to the establishment of a new industry or facility that would cause an increase in population, there are factors within the existing population which may work to prove or disprove the projected population for the Siler City planning area. Below is a brief discussion of some of the innate population characteristics.

Females of Childbearing Age

The 1960 census enumerated 844 women in the Siler City area of childbearing age (15-39). In order to determine the situation in 1970 an approximation can be obtained by subtracting the 30-39 age group in 1960 and adding the younger 5-14 year old females which will have replaced that older age group by 1970. In so doing, there is an overall increase of exactly 100 females. Approximately 944 or 21.1 percent of Siler City's 1960 population will be in the productive age group in 1970. Taking into account the population increase from 1960-1967 and if 21 percent of the estimated 1967 population of 4,934 is in the productive age group today, this number has already increased to 1,036 females over the 1960 figure of 844.

Whether or not the annual number of births increases in future years depends upon birth control practices, economic factors, individual family choice and/or preference as to family size, and the overall change in the total population. The increase in the number of women of childbearing age boosts the potential for a subsequent rise in the number of births.

Age Group Structure

A young population may be indicative of a future population increase. The 1960 population data enumerated in Table VI indicates just that. The 5-14 year old age group represents the largest category in both Mathews Township and Siler City. One third of the township and Siler City populations were under 15 years of age in 1960. Again, the increase in population will be noticed when this large 5-14 year old group of females reaches childbearing age. The female 8-14 year olds in 1960 would now be of childbearing age. The younger, for the most part, are still attending school.

TABLE VI

SILER CITY AND CHATHAM COUNTY
MALE-FEMALE POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS FOR 1960

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Siler City</u>		<u>Chatham County</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Under 5	232	235	1447	1393
5-14	484	472	3053	2887
15-24	312	314	2024	1908
25-34	312	330	1630	1739
35-44	336	366	1807	1737
45-54	230	211	1408	1379
55-64	147	183	980	1151
65 and over	<u>108</u>	<u>183</u>	<u>1071</u>	<u>1171</u>
	2161	2294	13420	13365
	Ratio 48.6 : 51.4		Ratio 50.1 : 49.9	

Source: 1960 U. S. Census.

Other Vital Statistics

Between the 1960 census and January 1, 1967, public records for Siler City indicate 605 births and 219 deaths or an increase of 386 persons. This was a natural increase of 55 persons per year. There are many uncontrollable factors which would make the birth and death rates fluctuate and in turn affect the population projections. In the long run, the rates may balance to show a natural increase in the town and the township population.

Reflected in the natural increase over the past decades is a change in the household size of Siler City residents. The Land Use Survey suggests the 1967 average household size was 3.3 persons in town. The census for 1960 showed the population per household in town at 3.48 persons. The trend has been an increase in the number of households and a decrease in family size.

Migration

The movement of residents to or from Siler City naturally affects future population estimates. If a substantial number of young families move into town, the future projections could be drastically altered. A new industry which requires a labor force of several hundred workers might attract many families into the area. This industrial laborer's family brings an immediate increase in population (his family) and a potential increase in family size that may be realized in coming years.

Siler City has had several new industries initiate operations since 1960. These plants have attracted some new families; other families have come to Siler City for a multitude of additional reasons. If the natural increase for 1960-1966 mentioned on page 16 is added to the 1960 population (4,455 + 386), a population gain of 89 persons is indicated by the present estimate. An increase through in-migration may have a "multiplier effect" on population growth in the town. Migrants are nearly always youthful and thus alter the age structure of the population in a direction favorable to higher fertility and lower mortality.

In the fringe area, the recent subdivision survey revealed that seventeen families have moved from other towns to their present home since 1960. This accounts for an estimated overall increase of fifty-nine (59) persons who have migrated to the Siler City fringe area subdivisions from other communities.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Minority Groups

The Siler City incorporated area contained a very small percentage of nonwhites prior to 1960. Siler City's Negro population was only 6 percent of the total in 1950. The 1960 annexation included the Negro residential area of Lincoln Heights in the northern portion of town. This population was reflected in the 1960 census. There were listed at that time 986 Negroes or 21.7 percent of the town's population. No other minority groups were living in Siler City in 1960.

The Negro housing area of Lincoln Heights extends north into the fringe area. Booker T. Washington Park subdivision is a new Negro housing development just north of Lincoln Heights, also in the fringe. These and other Negro housing areas are enumerated in the population figures for Mathews Township. The township contains 2,182 Negroes who are 28.3 percent of the population. This is a higher percentage than was indicated for the town area.

The percentage of Negro population for the state was 25.3 percent in 1960; for Chatham County, 31.4 percent.

Educational Level of the Population

The population characteristics of age, sex, birth and death rates, etc., are important factors in the structure of the community. However, education and employment skills, and the income which local citizens are able to earn with these skills, also greatly influence the character of the town. By understanding these characteristics, the town can attempt to have an influence upon its citizens by providing better education and by aiding in the establishment of higher paying industries which will utilize the educational and employment skills to be found within the local population.

As a State, North Carolina does not fare well in comparison to other States when discussing educational levels of achievement. Although the median of 10.3 years of education for Siler City residents is above the North Carolina median (8.9) and the Chatham County median (8.7) it still ranks lower than the national level of education (median of 10.6 years of education).

The past census indicated a much greater number of high school graduates over the 1950 census. Not all of this increase could have been from the area annexed. Although the educational data of the 1950 and 1960 censuses for Siler City should not be compared because of unequal geographic areas, Table VII is included as an informational base to later be compared with 1970 data.

TABLE VII

EDUCATIONAL DATA FOR SILER CITY, 1960

<u>Years of School Completed</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Persons 25 years old and over	2,420	100		
School years completed:				
None	31	1.2		
Elementary: 1 to 4 years*	173	7.1		
5 to 7 years	556	23.0		
8 years	240	9.9		
High School: 1 to 3 years	488	20.2		
4 years	568	23.5		
College: 1 to 3 years	202	8.4		
4 years or more	162	6.7		
Median school years completed	10.3			

* Persons with less than five years of school are referred to as functional illiterates. There were 204 such persons in 1960.

Source: PC (1) - 35C - U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

Current enrollment figures in Siler City's schools are indicative of a slightly increasing school population over past years. Third month enrollment figures (October 30 - November 28, 1967) for Siler City's three elementary and two high schools were as follows:

TABLE VIII

SILER CITY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
FOR PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 28, 1967

	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>		
		<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Elementary</u>				
Chatham	1-8		697	697
Henry Siler	1-7	203	3	206
Paul Braxton*	1-8	875	15	890
<u>Secondary</u>				
Chatham*	9-12	1	283	284
Jordan Mathews	9-12	<u>531</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>542</u>
		1,610	1,009	2,619*

Source: Chatham County Superintendent's Office, Board of Education, Pittsboro, N. C., January, 1968.

* Includes special education classes.

School enrollment totaled 2,619 students in all grades for the third month report of the 1967-68 school year. The year before the enrollment was 2,560 students. Thirty-seven (37) percent of the total city enrollment is attending the Negro Chatham Elementary and Chatham High School. Minor progress in integrating the school system has occurred through the freedom-of-choice plan as figures above indicate.

Jordan Mathews High School offers its students a college preparatory course schedule as well as home economics and other vocational classes. Chatham High offers vocational courses which includes home economics and agriculture. Both of the latter subjects are of little aid in obtaining jobs.

Further education is sought by two thirds of the Jordan Mathews graduates; less than one third of the Chatham graduates pursue further education. Of the students who do attend advanced instructional classes, half attend colleges and the other half business and/or vocational training schools. This is true of both white and Negro high school graduates.

The opportunity for post high school education is available. Nearby vocational schools are located in Sanford, Asheboro and Burlington. Other training schools are to be found in major Piedmont Crescent cities. There are an abundant number of junior colleges and four year colleges in the state; however, many graduates in Siler City could be limited in application either financially or scholastically. Further strengthening the

Chatham County School System, providing better facilities for students and teachers, and increasing the annual teachers pay-scale will do much to improve the end product of the educational system. A stronger educational program will be most important if the town is to attract new families and expand the industrial economy. The town and its citizens cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

Presently, most of the students who leave town temporarily for further training eventually leave it permanently in order to find suitable work. It is estimated by employment and school authorities that perhaps 30 percent of the white high school graduates and most of the Negro graduates from Siler City who joined the labor force left town to do so. Because suitable jobs are not available in Siler City, the town is losing the young people which it has educated. Additional young men leave town to fulfill their military obligation. They may also eventually find employment in another community.

This situation is a waste of local resources, of local effort, and of local investment. For years, local high school students have been educated by not only county and state taxes through high school but also sometimes by state taxes through college. The skills which they have acquired through their public education are now often being adapted to expand the economy of some other area. The money they earn is now being spent for goods purchased in another area. This is perhaps because the young people are forced to move out of the community in order to find a suitable and attractive job. The community, as it fails to provide job opportunities, is losing its own people who were born and reared in the area, those who would often make a good citizen.

Employment in Siler City

In 1960, 2,031 Siler City residents were employed. Table IX indicates the important labor statistics for 1960. Nearly 84 percent of the male population is represented in the labor

TABLE IX

SILER CITY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 1960

	<u>Age 14 And Over</u>	<u>Not In Labor Force</u>	<u>In Labor Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>
Males	1,492	241	1,251	1,226	25
Females	<u>1,623</u>	<u>780</u>	<u>843</u>	<u>805</u>	<u>38</u>
Total	3,115	1,021	2,094	2,031	

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1960.

force. The 25 unemployed males is only 2 percent of the total. Fifty-two (52) percent of the women worked; unemployed among the female sex was 4.5 percent in 1960. The number of males not in the labor force over 14 years of age are primarily those who are attending school.

Of the various occupations of employment, the 1960 census indicated that over a third of the workers are of the census category "operatives and kindred workers". This reflects the presence of Siler City's textile, furniture and food processing industries which require this type of worker.

By industry, 25 percent of the workers who reside in town held jobs in the textile and apparel industry; 12.5 percent in furniture and wood products industries; 20 percent in retail trade. Collectively, 46 percent of the workers were engaged in manufacturing occupations.

Not all Siler City residents work in Siler City, it should be noted. In 1960, 8.9 percent of the labor force had found more attractive employment opportunities outside Chatham County.

Employment in Mathews Township

Township employment data provide information which includes the town and the fringe area plus the remainder of the Mathews Township. This employment data gives a better view of the planning area. (See Table X). Seventy-eight percent of the males

TABLE X

MATHEWS TOWNSHIP EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 1960

	Age 14 And Over	Not In Labor Force	In Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed
Males	2,701	595	2,106	2,060	46
Females	<u>2,764</u>	<u>1,462</u>	<u>1,302</u>	<u>1,224</u>	<u>78</u>
Total	5,465	2,057	3,408	3,284	124

Source: 1960 unpublished census data - Special Table PH-4.

are in the township labor force compared to 83.8 percent in town. There were 1,314 additional persons in the labor force from Mathews Township beyond the town limits.

Area-Wide Industrial Labor Market

Interviews with industrial employers in the planning area support the view that additional employable workers are now difficult to obtain. Industrial promotion of certain types of

industry for Siler City has temporarily slowed because of the tight labor market conditions. According to figures prepared by the Employment Security Commission, however, within a 25 mile radius of Siler City there are supposed to be 2,505 persons seeking jobs who possess production job skills or who are deemed trainable for jobs at the semiskilled level or higher. (See Table XI). Siler City does not have the only interest in these persons; Greensboro, Burlington, Asheboro, and other nearby cities are in competition with Siler City for these workers.

TABLE XI

NUMBER AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRODUCTION-TYPE
WORKERS WITHIN 25 MILE RADIUS OF SILER CITY

Miles From Siler City	Available Workers			Available Skilled Workers		Available Semi- Skilled Workers		Unskilled and Inexperienced But Trainable	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	2,505	1,115	1,390	100	30	190	350	825	1,010
0 to 15	655	300	355	30	10	55	85	215	260
15 to 20	880	385	495	40	10	65	135	280	350
20 to 25	970	430	540	30	10	70	130	330	400

Source: "Estimate of Resident Production Worker Availability for the Area of Siler City", Employment Security Commission of North Carolina (Table prepared from June, 1966, data), Raleigh, N. C., December 6, 1967, publication.

Family Income

Chatham County ranked 40th in the State's 100 counties in median family income in 1959. The amount of \$3,611 was just slightly below the State median income of \$3,956. The annual rate of increase in real income (that is, in real purchasing power) from 1949 to 1959 was 5.8 percent. This compares favorably with the State's 4.3 percent annual gain.

Siler City's median income was \$5,107 in 1959. This amount was well above the State median and above the median for urban families throughout the State (\$4,843). In Mathews Township outside Siler City the median was \$3,563 which is fairly high for a rural population because family members were employed in Siler City firms and many women worked which gave these families two incomes. Comparison of the above medians to the U. S. median family income of \$5,660 places the seemingly encouraging picture of the Siler City median family income in a different perspective.

TABLE XII

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME, 1959*

United States	5,660
North Carolina	3,956
Chatham County	3,611
Mathews Township	3,563
Siler City	5,107

* Median income refers to the figure where half of the families earn more, half earn less.

The distribution of family income for Siler City's 1,174 families in 1960 follows in Table XIII. The low incomes (only 332 families or 28 percent earned over \$7,000 per year) reflect low levels of education and related employment opportunities. The fact that makes this percentage even more astounding is that approximately fifty-two (52) percent of the females over 14 years of age also hold jobs. It would be logical to expect that where husband and wife are both working incomes would be above this level. The situation may have corrected itself since the 1960 census.

TABLE XIII

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY INCOME, 1959
FOR SILER CITY

	<u>All Families</u>	<u>Negro Families</u>
No. of families	1174	183
Incomes under \$1,000	39	12
\$1,000 - \$1,999	87	55
\$2,000 - \$2,999	114	43
\$3,000 - \$3,999	200	36
\$4,000 - \$4,999	130	16
\$5,000 - \$5,999	159	12
\$6,000 - \$6,999	113	--
\$7,000 - \$7,999	158	3
\$8,000 - \$8,999	59	--
\$9,000 - \$9,999	41	5
\$10,000 - \$14,999	47	--
\$15,000 - \$24,999	24	--
Over \$25,000	3	--
Per Capita Income	\$1,506	\$584

Source: U. S. Census, 1960, PC (1), 35C, N. C., Table 81.

Per Capita Income

The relative situation between local census units in North Carolina and the United States is similar to those presented for median family income. On the average each person in Siler City supposedly "earned" \$1,506 for 1959. State and county per capita earnings were also under the national level. Table XIV depicts this now dated information. Negro per capita income in Siler City was \$584 in 1959.

TABLE XIV

PER CAPITA INCOME, 1959

United States	\$1,853
North Carolina	\$1,260
Chatham County	\$1,034
Siler City	\$1,506

ECONOMY

THE ECONOMY

INDUSTRY

Every urban place owes its existence to some type or types of urban activity. Many are oriented toward manufacturing; some are commerce and distribution centers; others are centers of government and education.

In recent decades, manufacturing has gained increasing importance in the Siler City planning area, both as a source of employment and as a boost to the local economy. The town has succeeded in broadening its economic base as is evidenced by the variety of industry found in and around Siler City. New manufacturing jobs have been created in several new and expanding plants since 1960. These jobs create the demand for more support workers, housing, and various goods and service. Noticeably lacking from the newer industries, however, are the higher-wage growth industries of metals and electronics. The town should not put all their long range hopes solely on low-paying industries (textiles, furniture, food processing).

Table XV lists the name of the companies in the planning area, the product manufactured, current employee totals and the year the company was established in Siler City. Total employment in these industries is 3,196 persons. Not all, of course, are from Siler City. These firms attract approximately 30 percent of their workers from distances ranging between 2-32 miles as was determined from a Division of Community Planning survey of several local industrial plants. The remainder are from Siler City. Table XVI names areas from which workers come and the percent of commuting employees from each.

Industrial growth in the Siler City area is evident from the number of industries that have located here since 1960. Between 1950-1960, five industries had come to this community. Since 1960, five (5) new plants have located in the Siler City area while two existing plants closed (a furniture company and hosiery manufacturer). Equally important to the industrial growth are those local industries which have expanded operations. With active but selective industrial promotion and good sites, continued growth is very possible. The 1960-1968 growth has not been at the pace of 1950-1959 partially because of a tight labor market.

The industrial payroll totaled nearly \$12 million for local industry in 1967. Much of the wages are being returned to the Siler City economy which is very fortunate for the community. A sample survey of two local industries was taken in December, 1967. This survey indicated that approximately 70 percent of the employees were from the immediate area. Only 3 percent of the employees were from communities larger than Siler City. This brief sample suggests that nearly all of the employees would be returning a large portion of their income into the economy of Siler City.

TABLE XV

SILER CITY PLANNING AREA INDUSTRIAL FIRMS
DECEMBER, 1967

Name	Product	Number of Employees	Year Established
Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Co.	Cotton and Rayon Yarn	285	1895
Boling Chair Company	Wood Office, School and Household Furniture	255	1904
Siler City Mills, Inc.	Flour and Feed	125	1910
Wrenn Brothers, Inc.	Dimension Lumber	45	1938
Chatham Novelties, Inc.	Occasional Furniture	90	1939
Mid-State Farms, Inc.	Poultry Dressing	125	1942
Chatham Foods, Inc.	Meat Processing	67	1948
A. J. Schneierson & Son	Ladies Lingerie & Dresses	500	1948
Collins & Aikman Corporation	Automotive Upholstery and Industrial Fabrics	420	1951
Siler City Manufacturing Co.	Hosiery and Leotards	731	1951
Foremost Yarn Mills, Inc.	Wool Yarn	80	1955
U. S. Plywood Corporation	Hardboard Cutting	46	1957
Sol Enterprises, Inc.	Sportswear	25	1959
Carolina Poultry, Inc.	Poultry Dressing	135	1960
Selig Manufacturing Co., Inc.	Living Room Furniture	172	1961
Mid-State Paper Box Co., Inc.	Assemble Boxes	25	1964
Hickory Mountain Farms, Inc.	Country Hams Processed	35	1965
B. B. Walker Shoe Company	Shoes	35	1967
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:		3196	

Source: Siler City Chamber of Commerce.

INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION

Siler City Development Corporation

A local pressure for change and development is manifested in a practical way through the Siler City Development Corporation, a private corporation locally owned by 50 Siler City residents. The purpose of the corporation is to acquire land for industrial development and finance or rent industrial buildings.

In 1960 the corporation purchased 56 acres northwest of town on U. S. 421 and adjacent to a railroad for development as an industrial park. Selig Manufacturing Company and A. J. Schneierson & Sons occupy approximately 46 acres of this tract. Additional recent land acquisitions bring the total land in the industrial park now available for development to 160 acres. The area is served by a 10 inch water line from Siler City. Sewage is handled by individual septic tanks.

Industrial Development Corporation

An Industrial Development Corporation was set up several years ago to provide a legal structure through which industrial development bonds could be sold to finance the A. J. Schneierson plant which was to be constructed in the industrial park. This legal structure for issuing such bonds remains in existence for future use.

Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce maintains a list of properties available to industry. The Chamber's Industrial Expansion Committee works with the Division of Commerce and Industry of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development in attempting to locate new industry in Siler City.

The Local Situation

Siler City appears to have great potential for industrial growth. The town has demonstrated that industries do succeed in this area. Besides its favorable location in respect to the Piedmont Crescent, the relocation of U. S. 421 will improve accessibility to markets and raw materials, and will make the land along the relocated route attractive for industrial development.

An existing shortage of labor for skilled jobs and low pay scales will have to be overcome to attract more workers. It appears that a great number of high school graduates would be available for employment within the area if suitable employment were available. The fact that the town is an attractive place in which to live is an asset in attracting industry.

Siler City is attractive to prospective industry when residential neighborhoods, community facilities, and recreational opportunities are considered. An indication of community spirit is exemplified through the town's 50 bed hospital which is supported by private contributions rather than tax money. Citizen support was again recently reaffirmed when construction began on a 30 bed addition. This again is being done by private contributions. It is effort such as this that indicates an overall community spirit to industrial management of prospective industry. The local environment and attitude has done much to further industrial promotion in the past ten years.

AGRICULTURE

Historically, Siler City is the service and trade center for a sizable agricultural hinterland. Although this rural county has remained oriented to agriculture, Siler City has gradually changed its rural character in favor of one which depicts a growing industrial town. The county agriculture, however, is reflected in the town's industry. There is a flour and feed mill, two poultry dressing plants, a meat processing plant and a country ham processing plant. All rely on the surrounding agricultural area for their supply of raw material input.

Chatham County leads the state in the production of poultry, hatchery operations, commercial eggs and turkeys. Within the county 25 million broilers are produced annually. Income from the poultry activity was \$20,929,000 in 1966. (See Table of "Income Derived from Chatham County's Farm Products" on page 31). Income from poultry and eggs provided approximately two-thirds of the county's agricultural income from farm products. The estimated 1966 income from poultry is twice as much as the 1961 figure.

A cooperative arrangement between the farmer and private enterprise makes broiler production beneficial to both. The hatcheries and feed mills usually supply the chicks and feed to the farmer. In turn, the farmer supplies the chicken house, the heat, and supervision. Very little labor is needed because of the automated feeding system. At the end of six to nine weeks, the chickens are sold at a guaranteed price.

Though the price of poultry fluctuates widely at times, this element of Chatham's farm economy is here to stay. The region has become developed for the intensive poultry production, the feed mills, hatcheries, poultry processing plants and chicken houses are in existence and the demand for poultry products continues to grow with the growing population. This industry makes very intensive use of otherwise poor farmland.

The second major income producing farm crop is forests in Chatham County. The gap between poultry and forestry income is a very noticeable \$18 million. Better management of the woodlands would approximately double yields. The County Agricultural Extension Agent estimates an upward yield from \$8.80 to \$15.00 annual income per acre if trees were properly trimmed and pine was substituted for the hardwood. Annual income with better practices could be nearly five million dollars. Many landowners simply let trees grow on their land and every few years cut them over.

Tobacco, the third ranking income crop, was grown on approximately 2,600 acres of Chatham County soil in 1966. With the present system of tobacco allotments, the share of the local economy from tobacco will probably continue about the same.

TABLE XVI

ESTIMATED INCOME DERIVED FROM CHATHAM COUNTY'S
FARM PRODUCTS, 1961 AND 1966

Commodity	Income 1961	Income 1966
Poultry and Eggs	\$10,495,000	\$20,929,000
Forestry	4,725,000	2,918,000
Tobacco	2,192,240	2,133,796
Milk	2,450,000	2,100,000
Cattle	820,000	1,084,000
Hogs	450,000	885,000
Other Grains (including soybeans)	595,000	577,500
Greenhouse and Nursery	---	420,000
Other Livestock and Livestock Products	162,000	174,275
Corn	180,000	140,000
Hay and Other Crops	135,000	56,250
Fruits and Vegetables	3,295	39,750
Cotton	31,150	7,672
Potatoes	750	3,000
TOTAL	\$22,239,435	\$31,468,243

Source: "Estimated Income From Sale of Farm Products, 1961-66, By Counties", N. C. Agricultural Extension Service, Raleigh, N. C., 1967. "Chatham County"

The county has 130 Grade A dairies which accounts for \$2.1 million from milk sales. Approximately 200 farmers raise beef cattle, hogs and sheep. Field crops grown in Chatham County include corn, grains, hays, sorghums and cotton. Total farm income in Chatham County for 1966 was \$31,468,243. This was down from a total of \$34.2 million in 1965 but up from \$25.8 million in 1964 and \$24 million in 1963.

Improved Production

The Chatham County Soil and Water Conservation District, with headquarters in Pittsboro, works with farmers to preserve and improve the productivity of their land. Various means of bettering farm management practices include irrigation, grassed waterways, contour planting, cover crops, planting of grasses and legumes, and the proper management of crop residue.

The region is suitable for the production of vegetables which would bring in more income. Vegetables are not presently grown in quantity because they require more labor than other crops. Irrigation could profitably be applied to truck farming.

The county will become more important as a source of food as the population of the county and Piedmont grows. Well managed farm practices will be necessary as more farmland is taken out of production for residential land use. Poultry production may increase by expanding sales in the eastern seaboard megalopolis from Newport News to Boston. The promotion of poultry sales, improved methods of packing and shipping, and increased use of the improved transportation facilities will make it possible for Chatham's poultry products to be marketed in an expanded trade area.

RETAIL TRADE

Data pertaining to retail sales and other business activity are provided in the U. S. Census of Business. Most recent information of this type relates to 1963 data. Previous censuses for comparison are those for 1954 and 1958. Table XVII provides retail sales trends for Siler City from 1954-1963. In 1963 retail sales for items such as gasoline, food, clothing, automobiles, etc., totaled \$13.4 million -- an increase of 24.2 percent over 1958. Also included in Table XVII are the total number of establishments, payroll and number of employees. Each have increased in total number and percent from 1958 to 1963 and at a greater degree than between 1954-1958.

TABLE XVII

RETAIL SALES TRENDS FOR SILER CITY BY
NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS, EMPLOYEES,
PAYROLL, AND SALES

	<u>1954</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Number of establishments	105	98	-6.7	118	+20.4
Sales (in thousands)	\$10,796	\$10,835	+0.4	\$13,454	+24.2
Payroll (in thousands)	\$851	\$1,017	+19.5	\$1,337	+31.5
Number of employees	390	404	+3.6	453	+12.1

Source: U. S. Census of Business, 1963.

As to type of business, Table XVIII indicates that food stores, eating and drinking places, lumber and building materials, and gasoline service stations have shown the largest percent increase in Siler City's sales. Eating and drinking establishments increased sales by 157 percent over the 1958 reporting period. Automotive dealers, because of the cost per unit sold, totaled the largest monetary amount of goods sold in 1965. Food stores were second in total sales. A miscellaneous grouping of retail stores listed as "others" dropped off 18 percent in sales after recording the biggest gain in 1958. The most recent and largest increases are in food, gasoline, and construction material sales. A category of "other retail stores" increased sales from 1954 to 1958 by 170.6 percent. This was the greatest advance in business activity since 1954. There are only two vacant stores in downtown Siler City at the present time.

In speaking of retail sales, it should be recognized that business is generated not only by the local residents, but by business, tourist, and social interests from other areas. As

TABLE XVIII

RETAIL SALES TRENDS FOR SILER CITY BY TYPE
OF ESTABLISHMENT, 1954, 1958, AND 1963
(Sales in \$000's)

Type of Business	<u>1954</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Lumber, bldg. material, hardware, farm equipment	\$2,847	\$ 771	-72.9	\$1,440	+86.8
General merchandise	452	677	+49.8	793	+17.1
Food stores	1,501	1,575	+4.9	2,553	+62.1
Automotive dealers	2,665	2,482	-6.9	2,996	+20.7
Gasoline service stations	654	707	+8.1	1,137	+60.8
Apparel, accessory stores	772	NA	--	729	-5.6
Furniture, home furnishings, equipment	450	461	+2.4	479	+3.9
Eating, drinking places	200	235	+17.5	605	+157.4
Other retail stores	928	2,511	+170.6	2,041	-18.7
Drug stores; house to house, mail order, vending machine sales	NA	NA	--	681	--
1963 TOTAL SALES:				<u>\$13,454</u>	

NA - breakdown withheld to avoid disclosure.

Source: U. S. Census of Business.

Siler City has its own retail trade area, it too belongs to a larger trade area at the same time and local residents contribute to that large trade area and vice versa. A sample survey of local buying habits indicated that most residents occasionally trade in Greensboro and other larger cities nearby. The purchase of forms of entertainment, dining out, clothing and furniture were the most mentioned reasons for purchases outside of Siler City's trade area.

CONCLUSION

To some local citizens, the facts presented in this report may not be well received. To these persons it may appear that the purpose of this report was to be critical of the shortcomings in Siler City. This certainly has not been the case. The report has rather been an honest appraisal based upon both a statistical and subjective analysis. By determining the strengths and weaknesses of Siler City's population and economic structure, a framework for the planning program can be developed. The determination of past and present activity in the town must necessarily be an early input to the planning process. In fact, it is a requirement for intelligent and rational decisions concerning the town's future orderly growth and development.

In summary, some of the major problems facing Siler City are:

- Low educational attainment compared to the nation
- Tight labor market; shortage of labor for skilled jobs
- Incomes are low
- Outmigration of educated young population
- Variety of industry is mostly low wage paying industry
- No available rental housing; very few homes for sale
- Manufacturing employment concentrated primarily in the textile and food processing industries which are becoming more automated throughout the nation
- A young population who require a variety of recreational facilities that have not been provided

The population and economic picture is not entirely clouded by the above problems. Despite these subjects mentioned which need immediate attention, the Siler City area has the following positive aspects pertaining to the population and economic structure. They are:

- Increasing population since the town's incorporation in 1887
- Gaining a larger percentage of the county population
- In-migration
- Many nice housing developments in the planning area
- A substantial number of production type workers available for employment within a twenty-five mile radius
- Increasing retail sales, employees, establishments and payrolls
- Primary retail trade center of Chatham County
- Well developed community facilities
- A good potential for industrial development and increased population and economic growth
- Better transportation facilities are creating more interaction with other Piedmont Crescent cities
- A very strong community spirit and an interest in planning for the future development of the community

- An industrial park and sites for the choice of future industrial prospects

In order to diversify and stabilize the existing economic base and subsequently provide employment for the expanding planning area population, a more concentrated effort should be made to attract industries other than those engaged in textile and food processing. If possible, the new industries brought to the Siler City area should be those which have a high growth potential, provide male employment and are relatively insensitive to the national business cycle. In turn, this would increase economic and employment opportunities, and consequently encourage many of the young people to remain in Siler City. Often those persons who migrate to other communities are the better educated who, if they stayed, would help raise the levels of education, income and housing and in so doing aid the development of a larger middle class. An upward distribution of wealth would result in increased growth and prosperity for Siler City.

An aid to balanced growth will be the implementation of an effective planning program. The ability to show prospective industry what there is now and what future development is to be like will aid in efforts to attract new industry. Other possibilities for local improvement of the retail economy would be through the analysis of the central business district to determine the need for renovating the downtown area.



REGIONAL
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